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TO RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE 1049
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA IMMEDIATE 3086
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5239

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 126086

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SR](#) [YI](#) [KV](#)

SUBJECT: REQUEST: ENCOURAGING SERBS TO VOTE IN KOSOVAR
ELECTIONS AND TONING DOWN BELGRADE,S RHETORIC

Classified By: EUR ACTING A/S K. VOLKER. REASONS 1.4 (B), (C) AND (D)

¶1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST FOR EMBASSY BELGRADE AND
USOFFICE PRISTINA. SEE PARAGRAPHS 5 AND 6 FOR DETAILS.

¶2. (C) BELGRADE LEADERSHIP HAS INDICATED THAT IT WILL NOT
SUPPORT KOSOVO SERB PARTICIPATION IN KOSOVO'S NOVEMBER
17ELECTIONS. THIS POSITION IS AT ODDS WITH THE KEY USG AND
CONTACT GROUP AIM OF OBTAINING KOSOVO SERB PARTICIPATION IN
THE ELECTIONS. KOSOVO SERBS, ALTHOUGH WE SENSE THEY WANT TO
PARTICIPATE, WILL NOT REGISTER THEIR PARTIES FOR THE
ELECTIONS ABSENT A GO-AHEAD FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA.
THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 12.

¶3. (C) IN CONSULTATIONS ON SEPTEMBER 5 AND 6, THE QUINT
SPECIFICALLY AGREED TO CALL ON KOSOVO SERBS TO REJOIN
KOSOVO,S INSTITUTIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING
ELECTIONS. (NOTE: RUSSIA,S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONTACT
GROUP ALSO AGREED WITH THIS MESSAGE, BUT DISAGREED WITH THE
NEED TO PRESS BELGRADE ON ITS UNHELPFUL RHETORIC. AS A
RESULT, THIS DEMARCHE IS BEING DONE ON A BILATERAL BASIS,
SEPARATELY, BY EACH MEMBER OF THE QUINT). WITH A SEPTEMBER
12 DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION, TIME IS PRESSING.

¶4. (C) WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE DISRUPTIVE RHETORIC
COMING FROM BELGRADE RECENTLY (I.E. PM KOSTUNICA,S STATEMENT
THAT HARM WOULD COME TO COUNTRIES WHO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO,S
INDEPENDENCE AND STATE SECRETARY PROROKOVIC,S STATEMENT
THREATENING THE USE OF SERBIAN TROOPS IN KOSOVO IF KOSOVO
DECLARES INDEPENDENCE),ESPECIALLY WHEN SUCH STATEMENTS COME
ON THE HEELS OF BELGRADE AND PRISTINA,S PROMISE TO THE
TROIKA LAST WEEK TO REFRAIN FROM PROVOCATIVE ACTS AND
STATEMENTS.

¶5. (SBU) POSTS ARE THEREFORE INSTRUCTED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS TO APPROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT THE
HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL:

BEGIN DEMARCHE POINTS (FOR BELGRADE):

-- KOSOVO IS FACING IMPORTANT ELECTIONS ON NOVEMBER 17. IT IS
IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO THAT ALL COMMUNITIES,
INCLUDING KOSOVO,S SERBS, PARTICIPATE IN THESE ELECTIONS.

-- THE CONTACT GROUP WILL PUBLICLY URGE KOSOVO,S SERBS TO
REJOIN KOSOVO,S INSTITUTIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING
ELECTIONS.

-- REGARDLESS OF THE PENDING STATUS TALKS, IT IS AN
ELEMENTARY INTEREST OF KOSOVO SERBS TO PURSUE THEIR INTERESTS
THROUGH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN KOSOVO, ESPECIALLY THROUGH
ELECTIONS TO AND REPRESENTATION IN THE KOSOVO ASSEMBLY.

-- WE HAVE THE STRONG IMPRESSION THAT MANY KOSOVO SERB
LEADERS WANT TO CONTEST THESE ELECTIONS, BUT ARE BEING HELD

BACK BY ADMONITIONS FROM BELGRADE.

-- BOYCOTTING THESE ELECTIONS WOULD LEAVE KOSOVO SERBS WITH VIRTUALLY NO POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FUTURE.

-- TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE BECAUSE THE DEADLINE FOR PARTY REGISTRATION FOR THE ELECTIONS IS SEPTEMBER 12.

-- DURING THE TROIKA MEETINGS IN VIENNA ON AUGUST 30, THE GOVERNMENTS OF BELGRADE AND PRISTINA AGREED TO REFRAIN FROM PROVOCATIVE ACTS OR STATEMENTS. SINCE THEN, OFFICIALS IN BELGRADE HAVE CONTINUED TO ISSUE PROVOCATIVE AND THREATENING PUBLIC STATEMENTS, INCLUDING MENTION OF THE POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE BY SERBIAN TROOPS IN KOSOVO ITSELF AND OTHER ACTIONS AGAINST KOSOVO AND OTHER NATIONS.

-- THESE TYPES OF STATEMENTS ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THE COMMITMENT MADE IN VIENNA AND ARE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND DETRACT FROM THE UN SANCTIONED PROCESS TO FIND COMPROMISE AND AGREEMENT.

-- WE HOPE THAT THESE STATEMENTS DO NOT REPRESENT THE ACTUAL VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA.

-- WE BELIEVE THIS ISSUE CAN BE AND SHOULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH PURELY DIPLOMATIC MEANS, WITHOUT RESORT TO THREATS AND PROVOCATIONS.

16. (SBU) BEGIN DEMARCHE POINTS (FOR PRISTINA)

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-- KOSOVO IS FACING IMPORTANT ELECTIONS ON NOVEMBER 17. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO THAT ALL COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING KOSOVO,S SERBS, PARTICIPATE IN THESE ELECTIONS.

-- THE CONTACT GROUP WILL PUBLICLY URGE KOSOVO,S SERBS TO REJOIN KOSOVO,S INSTITUTIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS.

-- UNITY TEAM LEADERSHIP CAN DEMONSTRATE PUBLICLY ITS COMMITMENT TO MULTI-ETHNIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT BY PUBLICLY ENCOURAGING ETHNIC SERB PARTICIPATION IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

-- UNITY TEAM LEADERSHIP CAN ALSO UNDERSCORE KOSOVO,S READINESS TO SELF-GOVERN BY INSISTING ON ETHNIC SERB PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS.

17. (U) POINT OF CONTACT: DAVID SCHROEDER IN THE OFFICE OF SOUTH CENTRAL EUROPE, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS (202-647-0310).
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